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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
determining, by a processor within a peripheral device, that an amount of a consumable associated with the peripheral device has decreased below a predetermined threshold; and
transmitting an email from the peripheral device to order additional supplies of the consumable.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting comprises transmitting the email to a vendor web site across a firewall.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting comprises transmitting the email to a personal computer associated with the peripheral device, and further comprising transmitting a second email from the personal computer to a vendor web site across a firewall.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and determining comprises determining when a toner level in the hard copy output engine has decreased below a toner low threshold.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine, and further comprising:
determining, by the processor within the hard copy output engine, when a predetermined work threshold has been reached; and
transmitting an email to request periodic service in response to determining.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and the processor comprises an embedded web server, and further comprising:

determining, by the web server, when a predetermined work threshold has been reached; and

transmitting an email to request periodic service in response to determining.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and the processor comprises an embedded web server, wherein determining comprises determining when a toner level in a hard copy output engine has decreased below a toner low threshold and wherein transmitting comprises transmitting the email to a vendor web site across a firewall.

8. An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code embodied therein that is configured to cause a processor contained in a peripheral device to:

determine that an amount of a consumable associated with the peripheral device has decreased below a predetermined threshold; and

transmit an email from the peripheral device to order additional supplies of the consumable.

9. The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit the email comprises computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit the email to a vendor web site across a firewall.

10. The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit comprises computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit the email to a personal computer associated with the peripheral device for retransmission from the personal computer to a vendor web site across a firewall.

11. The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to determine comprises computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to determine when a toner level in the hard copy output engine has decreased below a toner low threshold.

12. The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine, and wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to determine comprises computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the hard copy output engine to determine when a predetermined work threshold has been reached and the computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit comprises computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the hard copy output engine to transmit an email to request periodic service in response to reaching the predetermined work threshold.

13. The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and the processor comprises an embedded web server and further comprising computer readable code configured to cause the embedded web server to:

determine when a predetermined work threshold has been reached; and
transmit an email to request periodic service in response to reaching the predetermined work threshold.

14. The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and the processor comprises an embedded web server and wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to determine comprises computer readable code configured to cause the embedded web server to determine when a toner level in a hard copy output engine has decreased below a toner low threshold and wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit comprises computer readable code configured to cause the embedded web server to transmit the email to a vendor web site across a firewall.

15. A computer implemented control system for a hard copy output engine, the system comprising:
 memory configured to store a software module; and
 processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to:
 determine that an amount of a consumable associated with a peripheral device has decreased below a predetermined threshold; and
 transmit an email from the peripheral device to order additional supplies of the consumable.

16. The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the processing circuitry is further configured to employ the software module to:
 determine that an amount of a consumable associated with the peripheral device has decreased below a predetermined threshold; and
 transmit an email from the peripheral device to order additional supplies of the consumable.

17. The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and wherein the processing circuitry and memory together comprise an embedded web server, and the embedded web server is further configured to:

determine when a toner level in the hard copy output engine has decreased below a toner low threshold; and

transmit an email across a firewall to a vendor web site to order additional toner in response to determining.

18. The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and wherein the processing circuitry and memory together comprise an embedded web server, and the embedded web server is further configured to transmit the email to a personal computer associated with the peripheral device for retransmission from the personal computer to a vendor web site across a firewall.

19. The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the peripheral device is chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers and wherein the processing circuitry and memory together comprise an embedded web server.

20. The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the processing circuitry is further configured to employ the software module to:

determine when a predetermined work threshold has been reached; and

transmit an email to request periodic service in response to reaching the predetermined work threshold.

21. A computer instruction signal embodied in a carrier wave carrying instructions that when executed by a processor cause the processor to:

determine that an amount of a consumable associated with the peripheral device has decreased below a predetermined threshold; and

transmit an email from the peripheral device to order additional supplies of the consumable.

22. The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit the email comprises a computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit the email to a vendor web site across a firewall.

23. The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit comprises a computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit the email to a personal computer associated with the peripheral device for retransmission from the personal computer to a vendor web site across a firewall.

24. The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine and wherein the computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to determine comprises a computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to determine when a toner level in the hard copy output engine has decreased below a toner low threshold.

25. The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the peripheral device comprises a hard copy output engine, and wherein the computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to determine comprises a computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the hard copy output engine to determine when a predetermined work threshold has been reached and the computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the peripheral device to transmit comprises a computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor contained in the hard copy output engine to transmit an email to request periodic service in response to reaching the predetermined work threshold.

determine when a predetermined work threshold has been reached; and
transmit an email to request periodic service in response to reaching the
predetermined work threshold.

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